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Montana Youth ChalleNGe Program Legislative Fact Sheet

The National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program was originally established in 1993, designed as a program to intervene in the life of at-risk youth by providing values, skills, education and the self-discipline needed to produce responsible, productive citizens. 10 states were selected to participate. Currently, there are approximately 30+ Youth ChalleNGe Programs operating throughout the United States, to include Puerto Rico.

In 1999, the Montana State Legislature authorized funding for the biennium to establish the initial class of the Montana Youth ChalleNGe Program (MYCP). It became the 27th Youth ChalleNGe Program in the nation – to date, MYCP has successfully graduated 1,045 Montana youth.

Located in Dillon, it is the only program of its kind nationally that's housed on a college campus and works in full partnership with the university system – The University of Montana-Western.

The population of the MYCP is comprised of males and females, aged 16 to 18, with the common characteristic of having previously withdrawn from the educational system. Some, but not all, may have had involvement with the judicial system and all are residents of the state of Montana. Some may have been abused, while others come from loving homes. Some are good athletes and some are not. Despite being high school dropouts, some are quite accomplished scholastically, while others are significantly challenged by academics. What they have in common is a deeply felt need to recalibrate their lives – all have made mistakes and all have affirmed their desire to make better choices by their voluntary participation in the Montana Youth ChalleNGe Program (MYCP).

The 22 week Program has 3 distinct phases: a 2 week initial indoctrination phase conducted at Ft. Harrison; a 20 week residence phase located on the UM-Western campus; and, most important, a one year post-residential phase sponsored by a volunteer mentor (usually in the cadets home town).

Youth ChalleNGe uses a balanced approach of discipline, care, concern and respect to connect with the youth. The eight core components of MYCP are: Leadership/Followership; Responsible Citizenship; Community Service; Life-Coping Skills; Physical Fitness; Health and Hygiene; Job Skills; and Academic Excellence.

Life Plan Development -Each youth will have in hand a completed life plan that outlines a realistic roadmap for success after completion of the residential phase of the Program.

Academic Excellence – MYCP is tasked with advancing the academic status of each youth who enters the Program. This advancement is primarily accomplished through the efforts of five hours daily of academic instruction, followed by two hours of supervised study hall. Volunteer tutors are made available whenever necessary. All cadets are measured individually against the T.A.B.E.

Although a youth does not need to receive a G.E.D to successfully complete the ChalleNGe Program, a 68% success rate has been established at the national level. MYCP exceeds that percentage each cycle.

Each youth is required to perform forty hours of community service – usually these efforts are conducted as a team effort, from working in the parks of Dillon, Birch Creek, Virginia/Nevada cities, Game Fish and US Forest Service requests for support.

One Year Tracking – Using both the mentor and post-residential case managers, all youth will be tracked for one year following graduation to measure continued success.

MYCP FACTS ON THE BACK PAGE

MONTANA YOUTH CHALLENGE PROGRAM

FACTS THRU CLASS FOURTEEN (XIV)

GRADUATED – 1,045

GED Success Rate – 82%

Average Grade Level Increase:

READING: 1.9

MATH: 1.5

Average Community Service Hours per Graduate:

52.63 hours

Total Community Service Hours Performed to Date:

Over 55,001.85 hours

Percent of Native American Graduates:

16%

Percent of Female Graduates:

25%

Mentor Match at Graduation:

89%

Post Residential Placement

(as last reported in Federal Reporting System)

<u>Category</u>	<u>*Year 1</u>	<u>*Year 2</u>	<u>*Year 3</u>	<u>*Year 4</u>	<u>Year 5</u>	<u>Year 6</u>	<u>Year 7</u>
Total number of grads	134	163	159	156	144	166	123
Full Time Employment	32%	31%	38%	38%	34%	36%	31%
Military	21%	35%	18%	20%	15%	14%	12%
Part Time employment	10.5%	5%	2%	4%	15%	7%	15%
Post Secondary Education	9%	7%	4%	7%	9%	4%	5%
Adult Education	4.5%	4%	1%	4%	7%	11%	12%
High School	1%	2%	1%		2%	2%	7%
Total	78%	84%	64%	73%	82%	74%	82%
Seeking Employment	7%	5%	5%	3%	4%	3%	5%
Homemaker			6%	3%		2%	1%
Unknown/Incarcerated/ Deceased	15%	11%	25%	21%	14%	21%	12%
Total	22%	16%	36%	27%	18%	26%	18%

***Program follow up 4 years post graduation, validates that approximately 80% of graduates are following their life plan goals.**